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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: TFH01: HONDURAS COUP: LOCAL PRESS WRAP-UP
09/03/2009

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 887 AND OTHERS

11. (U) Summary. This is a round-up of local news reported in major Honduran dailies on September 3. End Summary.

12. (U) An "El Herald" headline states that President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya was greeted in Washington with protests and the newspaper features a photo of anti-Zelaya protestors near George Washington University. According to "El Herald," the protestors were Honduran Americans and, in addition to an anti-Zelaya message, demonstrated to show their support for Micheletti's government and to defend democracy and the constitution. According to "La Prensa," protests against Zelaya for aligning himself with Venezuelan President Chavez were held in other states as well.

13. (U) Headlines in "La Tribuna," "El Herald," and "La Prensa" noted that Costa Rican President Oscar Arias stated on September 2 in a Sao Paulo based newspaper, "El Diario Folha", that he sees the November 29 presidential election as a way to end the political crisis in Honduras. According to "El Herald," Arias explained that regimes that took power by force have given way to elections in Central America. According to "El Tiempo," Arias told reporters that the three alternatives Micheletti has put on the table do not adhere to the basic principles of the San Jose Accord, and thus the international community will reject them. The article explains that although none of Micheletti's alternatives bring Zelaya back as President, they may bring him back to Honduras without reinstating him. National party presidential candidate Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo states in "El Tiempo" that Honduran elections must be recognized by Hondurans themselves before they are recognized by any international organization. Lobo's quote on the front page reads: The San Jose Accord is not the only way to solve the crisis.

14. (U) Micheletti's Deputy Foreign Minister, Marta Lorena Alvarado, publicly asked on September 2 that the Secretary listen to the de facto government and recognize the November 29 elections in Honduras, "El Herald" reports. The article notes that Alvarado sees it as only fair that the Secretary would meet with Micheletti's people after her meeting with Zelaya September 3.

¶5. (U) "El Tiempo" and "La Tribuna" feature photos of Ambassador Llorens with captions that say he is leaving the country again. "El Tiempo" includes a short article explaining that the Ambassador is the only one Ambassador who stayed in Honduras after the June 28 coup. (Note: "La Tribuna" states that Taiwanese Ambassador John Lai has also remained in Honduras after the coup. End note.) "El Tiempo" reports that the Ambassador's trip to the US coincides with the Secretary's meeting with Zelaya, but that the nature of the Ambassador's US visit has not been specified. The article also states that the US government has cancelled visas of some of Micheletti's collaborators, suspended issuance of non-immigrant visas to Hondurans, and suspended military and education assistance.

¶6. (U) According to CNN en Espanol September 2, Micheletti delivered a speech on September 2 in which he stated that Zelaya was in Washington specifically to promote further sanctions on assistance by the US government. "El Tiempo" reiterates that Zelaya hopes the US will declare the coup a military coup.

¶7. (U) Avenue 12 in Los Andes neighborhood in San Pedro Sula was confirmed as the location for a march against "chavista" politics (See Tegucigalpa 867). The march has been organized by a civic movement called "Honduras Is Ours" and is scheduled to take place on Friday September 4. Press September 2 reported that Micheletti is planning to participate in the demonstration.

HENSHAW